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THE OHIO RURAL VICTIMIZATION STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken in 1974 in an effort to learn more about the nature and scope of crime in rural Ohio. A victimization survey was administered to residents of 889 open country rural households located within nine selected counties. The recall period for reported incidents was confined to one year. Analysis of data showed property crime, especially those involving vandalism and larceny-theft, to be the overwhelming problem in rural Ohio. The finding was in contrast to the problem as reported by Ohio sheriffs via an offenders study conducted within the same counties during an overlapping time period. The disparity appears due to the fact that only 45 percent of admitted victimization incidents were reported to law enforcement agencies. The most frequently expressed justification for not reporting incidents was reflected in the statement, "It was no use." Several socio-economic characteristics of victims and non-victims were examined against the dependent variables of burglary, theft, and vandalism in an effort to discern differences between the two groups and/or within the victims' category. Only two relationships proved significant. First, residents in the highest income group were nearly twice as often victims of vandalism than middle and lower income groups. Second, church members from every denominational group examined owned property which was vandalized at a significantly greater rate than property owned by non-church members. The crime of vandalism was the only dependent variable which demonstrated marked differences when tested against the selected socio-economic characteristics. It is hoped that the findings from this first major statewide victimization study can provide fuel for generating hypotheses for future research.

THE OHIO RURAL VICTIMIZATION STUDY

The present descriptive report is an attempt to merge two yet barely probed areas of inquiry, rural crime and rural victimization.[1] It is the result of an attempt to illuminate the "dark figures" of crime (i.e., crimes not revealed by official data) via examination of the nature and extent of crimes committed against rural residents as reported by the victims of those crimes. It is the opinion of the authors that the Ohio study reported herein is the first major statewide victimization study to involve exclusively open country rural residents.[2]

THE PROBLEM

Rural crime is increasingly becoming a "manifest" problem for our rural communities. Traditionally believed to be a social ill confined within city boundaries, crime in the country was perceived as quite manageable within the reigns of authority assigned our police and judicial resources. The operation of effective formal social controls, coupled with the existence of time-honored informal ones (e.g., rural family), generally perpetuated a now erroneous view of rural America as a sanctuary of security. The view of rural crime as a problem not worthy of concerted attention is aptly reflected by the paucity of

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[1] Victimization, as defined in this report, refers to the study of victims of crimes from the viewpoint of the victims.

[2] In order that data collected via an Ohio Sheriff's offenders study be comparable with data collected during this victimization study, the rural sample was restricted to open country rural residents (i.e., persons residing outside of incorporated places). Ohio Sheriffs' have operational jurisdiction over such areas. The Ohio Sheriffs' offenders study was conducted during an overlapping time period and in the same counties selected for this victimization study (Phillips, 1975).

literature available heretofore. A meager total of six related articles, for example, have been published in Rural Sociology since its inception in 1937.

For a multiplicity of reasons, the level and pervasiveness of rural crime has increased dramatically (Figure 1). Although the level of officially documented incidents of crime remains higher for U.S. cities,

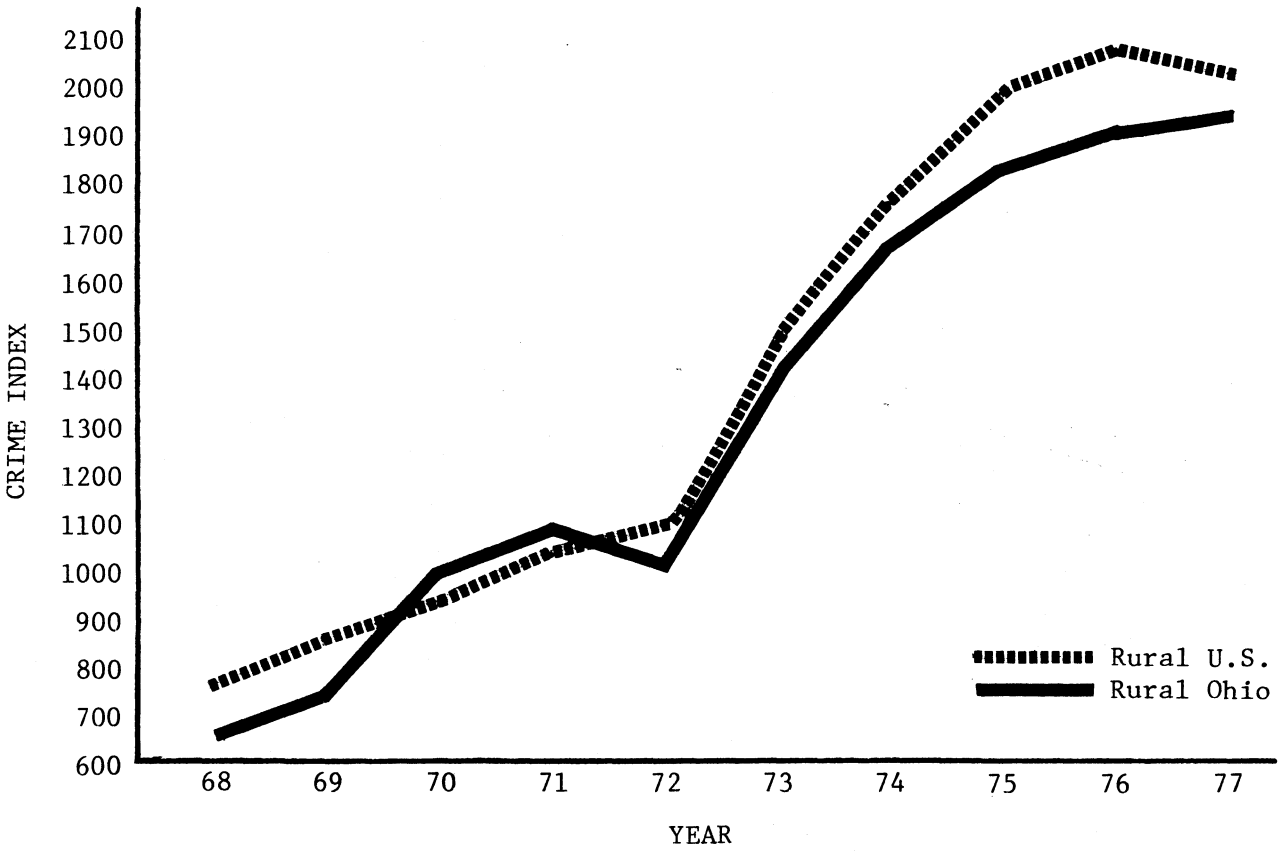

Figure 1: The U.S. and Ohio rural crime index.[3,4]
Source: Uniform Crime Reports, 1968-1977

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[3]The crime rate index for the Uniform Crime Reports is based on offenses of murder, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, and auto theft per 100,000 inhabitants.

[4]The most current available Uniform Crime Report data is utilized in this report, even though the present study was conducted in 1974. No apparent dissonance should surface as the rural crime problem has continued to climb unabated.

the escalation in rate of non-urban crime now surpasses that of our largest cities. The crime rate for rural America for the fifteen year period 1963-1977 increased 351 percent; for America's SMSA's, 287 percent (Phillips, et al., 1979:2). The seriousness of the existing rural crime problem is accurately demonstrated by Phillips, Carter, and Donnermeyer's observation that "the 'high' U.S. and SMSA crime rates of the middle sixties were a major impetus for the 1968 legislative enactment creating the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration" (1979:2). Today, the level of rural crime equals or exceeds the SMSA levels for the middle sixties.

Statements, precipitated principally by the urban crime problem, considering crime as ". . . the ultimate human degradation" (Clark, 1970:8) and one which could if left unchecked ". . . destroy the fiber of the nation" (Stewart, et al., 1971:29) regrettably seem applicable to the present rural crime problem.

Therefore, in order to gain further insight into the rural crime problem, several research questions were examined. What were the types of crimes occuring to rural residents as reported by victims? Were crimes known to law enforcement authorities different from those reported by rural residents? If so, why? How did property crime compare to violent crime? What were the nature of property crimes? Were the socio-economic characteristics of victims vs non-victims significantly different? Could types of victims be identified according to socio-economic criteria? These and other questions were addressed and will be examined following a discussion of the study's research tool, unit of analysis and methodology.

VICTIM SURVEY RESEARCH

Victim survey research began during the mid 1960's in the United States for purposes of uncovering crimes which were not revealed by official data. A presidential commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice offered this explanation for the initiation of victimization surveys: "Since better crime prevention and control programs depend upon full and accurate knowledge about the amounts and kinds of crime, the commission initiated the first national survey ever made of crime victimization" (sic, Hindelang, 1976:21).

In part, such research was designed to unearth that proportion of crimes which never found their way into the tabulations of official records (i.e., were never reported or not judged by law enforcement personnel to be labeled as crime). Additionally, the intent was to elaborate on the circumstance of crime, i.e., to convey, for purposes of criminological theory, research and policy, situational variables surrounding its occurrence. The limitations of the most widely used and reputable document of official crime statistics, the Uniform Crime Reports, are readily admitted in the UCR's staff's introductory comment, "Population size is the only correlate of crime utilized in this publication" (FBI, 1977:V).

In the words of Glaser, ". . . victim survey research should not be viewed as a replacement for police reports on the volume of crime, but as a continually necessary supplement to police figures. If both police and victim survey crime rates are tabulated, information on the difference between these rates may be just as valuable as either rate alone" (1970: 139-140). The valuable contribution of victim research is indeed ". . . more lucidity for the murkey concept of crime" (Glaser, 1970:138).

THE VICTIM

The criminal offenders' pursuit to acquisition and exercise illegitimate control over resources results in the genesis of a second category of participants; namely, the victims. Although acknowledging the validity of the postulate, "In some way everyone involved in a crime is a victim" (Barkas, 1978:6), for purposes of understanding the type of individuals likely to be encountered during interview phases of victim survey research, victim is here defined according to more limited criteria. The victim is the individual or institution who is injured and/or whose property is taken or damaged, and who following the incident remains consciously aware of his/her circumstance.

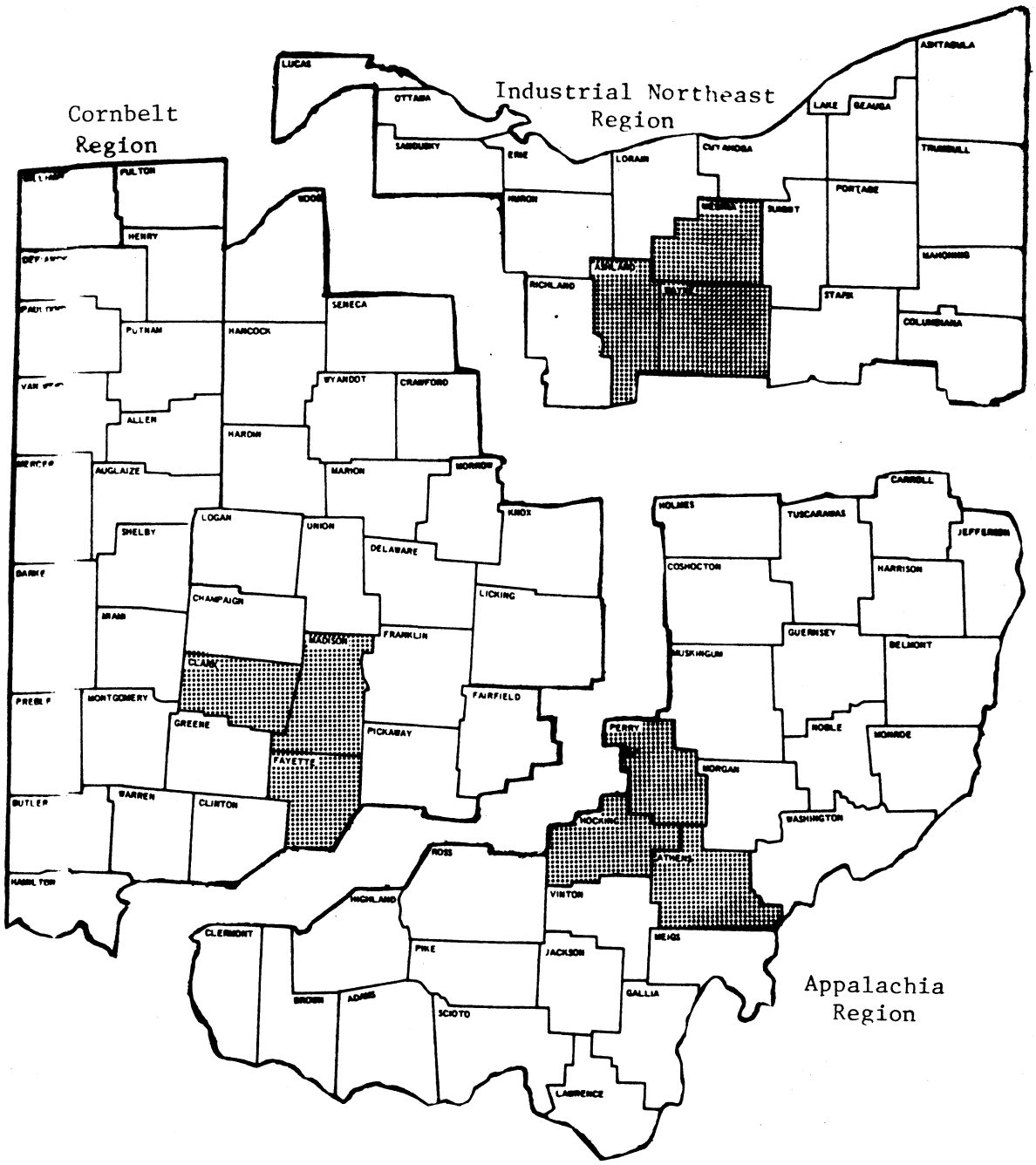
Such a definition departs in degree from Drapkin and Viano's in that the victim need not suffer "severly" nor be the recipient of "cruel or oppressive treatment" (1974:1), although such occurrences are possible. The individual whose car antenna is broken or whose fuel storage tank is emptied is likely to share such incidents with the survey interviewer, and subsequently be classified as the victim of vandalism or larceny-theft, even though it can be argued, he/she has not suffered "severely." Additionally, Glaser's use of the qualifier "deliberately injured individual" results in his conceptualizing two distinct categories of victims, those resulting from "predatory crimes" and those from "negligence crimes" (Glaser, 1970:137). In doing so, his schema bases itself on the deliberate intentions or lack thereof, of the offender. We find it more appropriate to base our schema on the predicament of the victim. Accordingly, the individual whose lawn or corn field is trampled as a result of reckless driving, although not the victim of deliberate action, remains quite cognizant and rather irate that his/her property has been damaged. Such damage is likely to be narrated to the interviewer.

It might also be noted that the inherent approach employed in victim survey research is likely to exclude certain categories of victims. Those crime situations in which the victim is not clearly identifiable or remains unaware of his/her straits (eg., the victim of fraud or shoplifting) are excluded (Glaser, 1970:137). Additionally, the victim of "victimless crime," that is, where the victim and offender can be one and the same (e.g., crimes involving drunkenness, narcotics, prostitution, and gambling) are likely to remain unreported (Dada, 1979:3-4). Further, we realize that victims of particular types of offenses (e.g., rape and spouse abuse) will likely hesitate to share such incidents during an interview.

And thus, as with most methods of data collection, judgemental evaluation of the balance of scales finds the favorable utility of the victim survey technique outweighing its limitations.

METHODOLOGY

Nine counties were selected on a stratified nonrandom basis to represent the state of Ohio. The state was first divided in a manner reflecting the three major economic regions of the state: Appalachia region; Cornbelt region; and Industrial Northeast region (Figure 2). Second, three counties per region were selected. According to region, they were: Appalachia region: Athens, Hocking, and Perry; Cornbelt region: Clark, Fayette, and Madison; and Industrial Northeast region: Ashland, Medina, and Wayne. It was desired that the counties in each region be adjacent so that patterns extending across county lines could be examined. The counties were selected on the basis of criteria such as type of agriculture, topographical features, population density, distance from metropolitan areas, and proximity to interstate highways.



Study Counties

Figure 2: Three geographical regions of Ohio and nine study counties.

In order to test the representativeness of the rural population within the selected counties vis-a-vis the 1970 Ohio rural population, a comparison of population age profiles was performed. No significant difference was revealed (Table 1). The rural population of the nine selected counties, it was concluded, were representative of the rural population of Ohio.

The following steps were employed to select the study's random sample population. First, ten townships were randomly drawn from all townships in each of the nine counties. From a local map, an intersection of two roads was then randomly picked in each township. This became the starting point for a continuous type sample. Interviewers were instructed as to the direction to proceed and the households to be selected. Thus, ten families per township were selected. Because of road arrangements and size of farms, additional interviews were required. Three additional townships were selected in Clark, two in Wayne, and one in Medina.

A total of 889 questionnaires were completed via drop-off questionnaires. Personal interviews were conducted in less than ten situations where individuals requested assistance in reading or filling out the questionnaire. Residents were instructed to report only those incidents which had occurred during the one-year period, August 1973-July 1974. Incidents occurring to any member of the household were noted. Mathematical adjustments were made to adjust for the different population densities within the study's counties.

Table 1: Comparison of the 1970 rural population by age for Ohio and the counties of Ashland, Athens, Clark, Fayette, Hocking, Madison, Medina, Perry, and Wayne.

Ohio Rural Population					
Age	Total		Nine Sample Counties		Percentage Differences
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Under 10	516,263	19.6	50,191	19.5	.1
10-14	310,412	11.8	29,758	11.6	.2
15-19	257,599	9.8	24,532	9.5	.3
20-24	160,387	6.1	16,517	6.4	.3
25-29	161,216	6.1	17,120	6.7	.6
30-34	157,875	6.0	16,268	6.3	.3
35-39	151,901	5.8	14,576	5.7	.1
40-44	160,994	6.1	15,066	5.9	.2
45-49	157,031	6.0	14,797	5.8	.2
50-54	141,112	5.4	13,707	5.3	.1
55-59	122,676	4.7	11,948	4.6	.1
60-64	100,621	3.8	9,958	3.9	.1
65+	230,586	8.8	22,587	8.8	.0
Total	2,628,673	100.0	257,025	100.0	----

Source: U.S. Census of Population-1970-PC(1)-C37 OHIO.

FINDINGS

Offenses

One of the first questions prompting this research was: What were the leading crimes occurring to rural residents in Ohio as reported by victims? Data in Figure 3 reveals vandalism (38%) as the leading crime, with theft (13%) a distant second. It should be noted that serious crimes such as homicide were reported at such low frequencies relative to all other crimes that they were included along with a large variety of miscellaneous crimes in the category "all other offenses."

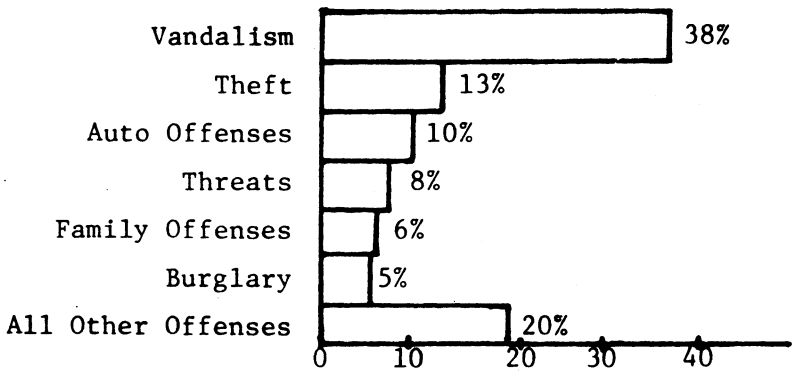


Figure 3: Percent of offenses by major categories of crime occurring to Ohio rural residents as reported by victims.

The acts of vandalism involved a host of infractions including marring, destroying or defacing of cars, windows, lawns, shrubs, mailboxes along with destruction of a multitude of other kinds of property. The vandalizing acts reported in this study did not involve public property in rural areas such as churches, schools, business places, and cemeteries. The addition of these frequently vandalized public places would have markedly increased the percent of all crimes that are destructive in nature.

Theft constituted the second largest category of crime in rural Ohio (Figure 3). If the different types of theft had been added together, that is, larceny, burglary, fraud, consumer fraud, robbery and auto theft, they would have exceeded vandalism in scope. Gasoline was the item most often stolen in rural areas. Twenty percent of all thefts involved this product. Many rural residents, farmers in particular, maintained gasoline storage facilities which were reported as most frequently not locked (67%).

Slightly more than half (53%) of larceny-theft incidents occurred to rural residents while at home. The other 47 percent happened away from home with 12 percent occurring at school. Two-thirds of the victims of larceny-theft were rural non-farm residents, with the remainder holding full or part-time farming occupations.

In order to ascertain if a significant difference existed between crimes known to police against those reported by residents participating in this study, victimization data were compared to data collected via an Ohio Sheriffs' Offenders Study (see footnote 2). Data in Figure 4 reveals theft (29%) as the leading crime known to rural Sheriff's, with vandalism (17%) and burglary (14%) second and third, respectively.

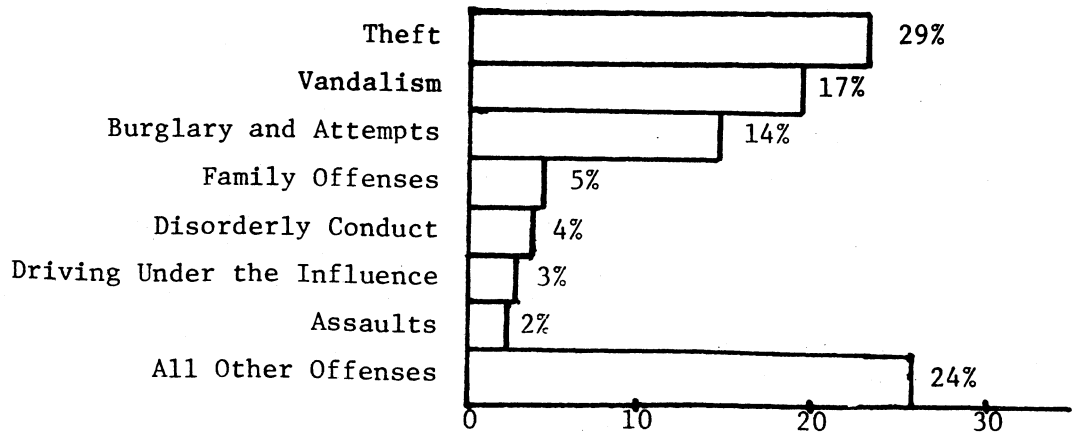


Figure 4: Percent of offenses by major categories of crime known to Ohio sheriffs for the period June 1974 through May 1975 (Phillips, 1975:9).

Comparison of the data shown in Figures 3 and 4 reveals a notable discrepancy between crimes known to police and those self-reported by victims. It is additionally worthy of note that in both studies the overwhelming types of crimes were property crimes as opposed to personal crimes. Property crimes represented over 90 percent of the rural crime total.

Such differences were anticipated as a result of preparatory review of urban victimization studies. Therefore, respondents were asked to indicate whether they had reported to a law enforcement agency the crime(s) which had occurred to them or members of their household. Data in Figure 5, broken down by major crime-categories, reveals a range of percentages for those types of crimes reported to law enforcement agencies. Sixty-three percent of burglaries were reported, whereas only 15 percent of cases of fraud were reported. Overall, only 45 percent of the crimes narrated during the interview process were reported to law enforcement authorities. The scope of the rural crime problem was at least twice as extensive as was known to police agencies.

Probing still further, respondents were asked why crimes were not reported. The data on this issue were compared to findings collected from an attitudinal study of Ohio's Farm Bureau Council members (Phillips, 1974:28).[5] Respondents from both studies indicated similar reasons why crimes were not reported. The primary and foremost justification related

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[5]A farm bureau council is a group of approximately six to seven families who gather together once a month to discuss, contribute to, change, critique, etc., farm bureau policy and program areas. Nearly all council participants are active or retired farmers and spouses. Members of 391 councils (46%) said they were aware of unreported crimes.

was reflected in the statement, "It was no use." Included within this category were descriptive phrases like "difficult to enforce," "lack of enforcement," "slow follow-up," "too much leniency in the courts," "red tape," "lack of legal evidence," and "would do no good." The second most frequent response suggested unwillingness to get involved. These responses implied a number of things: unwillingness to get someone they knew in trouble; the value of lost items did not justify the time required for follow-up; and mere negligence in following through. A third category noted "fear of reprisal." This was generally fear of reprisal against property more than fear of physical harm.

Socio-Economic Characteristics

Another dimension of the study involved examination by household of socio-economic characteristics of sample participants to determine if there were notable differences between victims and non-victims or if identifiably distinct categories of victims existed. The dependent varibles used as indicators included the property crimes of burglary, theft and vandalism.

The three property crime offenses were examined in terms of the primary occupation of the head of the household. These data were viewed from the perspective of farmers as compared to nonfarm rural residents. It was hypothesized that farm residents were more likely to spend more time at home than rural nonfarm residents because of the proximity of their work and because of the confining nature of certain types of farming. Information shown in Table 2 suggested farmers were not burglarizied or subject to thievery or vandalism any less than nonfarmers living in rural

areas. However, there was a tendency for nonfarmers to be burglarized more often than their farmer neighbors, and to be vandalized less often.

Table 2: Percent of households containing rural Ohioans who were victims of burglary, theft, or vandalism by occupation of the head of the household.

Occupation	Burglary Victims (%)	Theft Victims (%)	Vandalism Victims (%)
Farmer	1.4 (141)	7.1 (140)	18.1 (138)
Other	4.5 (638)	7.4 (631)	13.9 (634)
Total	4.0 (779)	7.4 (771)	14.6 (772)
	$X^2 > .05$, C=N.S.	$X^2 > .05$, C=N.S.	$X^2 > .05$, C=N.S.

Family size was then investigated as potentially a discriminating variable in victimization. It was hypothesized that households with four or more members would be victimized less often than households with three or less members. The rationale of this hypothesis was based upon the notion that households with more members would probably have someone at home for greater periods of time. Additionally, when away from home, members would more likely be accompanied by others. Data presented in Table 3 did not support this hypothesis. Size of the household was not related at a statistically significant level to the number of burglaries, thefts, or vandalistic acts.

Table 3: Percent of households containing rural Ohioans who were victims of burglary, theft, or vandalism by number of persons in the household.

Number of Persons in Households	Burglary Victims (%)	Theft Victims (%)	Vandalism Victims (%)
3 or Less	2.9 (411)	7.1 (410)	13.8 (405)
4 or More	4.8 (419)	7.8 (412)	15.3 (418)
Total	3.9 (830)	7.4 (822)	14.6 (823)
	$X^2 > .05$, C=N.S.	$X^2 > .05$, C=N.S.	$X^2 > .05$, C=N.S.

It was further hypothesized that where the major occupation of the spouse was a housewife, crime rates would be lower due to, for example, the increased time in occupancy of the home. The data revealed no significant differences in the incidents of burglary, theft, or vandalism, no matter whether the spouses' occupations were housewife or some other.

The age of the head of the household was broken down into those 64 and under and those 65 and over. The rationale was that most people over 65 would be retired and thus likely to be spending more time at home than those persons who were younger and employed. As seen in Table 4, those 65 and over tended to be victimized slightly less than their younger neighbors but not at a statistically significant level.

Table 4: Percent of households containing rural Ohioans who were victims of burglary, theft, or vandalism by age group.

Age Group	Burglary Victims (%)	Theft Victims (%)	Vandalism Victims (%)
64 and Under	4.2 (734)	7.4 (725)	15.4 (727)
65 and Over	2.4 (124)	6.4 (124)	9.8 (122)
Total	4.0 (858)	7.3 (849)	14.6 (849)
	$X^2 \triangleright .05$, C=N.S.	$X^2 \triangleright .05$, C=N.S.	$X^2 \triangleright .05$, C=N.S.

Income was viewed from the position that higher income persons were likely to display their income differential through more costly homes, more expensive equipment, more decorative surroundings, that is, reveal in numerous ways their income advantage. Therefore, it was hypothesized that higher income individuals would be burglarized, victimized by thieves, and/or vandalized at a greater frequency than medium and lower income persons. Extending the argument, it was hypothesized that medium income people would be victimized more often than lower income people.

Data are presented in Table 5. There were no statistically significant differences among income groups relative to the incidence of burglary. However, there was a definite tendency for those with lower incomes to be burglarized less frequently than the higher income group. Thefts were not statistically related to income levels. The lower and upper income groups were the same; the middle group slightly lower. A significant difference was revealed, however, for the crime of vandalism. The higher income group reported almost twice as much vandalism as the middle and lower income groups.

Table 5: Percent of households containing rural Ohioans who were victims of burglary, theft, or vandalism by income.

Income	Burglary Victims (%)	Theft Victims (%)	Vandalism Victims (%)
Less than $6,000	2.6 (157)	9.6 (157)	12.2 (156)
$6,000-12,000	3.6 (333)	6.3 (333)	12.7 (331)
More than $12,000	4.9 (209)	9.6 (198)	22.5 (200)
Total	3.8 (693)	8.0 (687)	15.4 (687)
	$X^2 > .05$, C=N.S.	$X^2 > .05$, C=N.S.	$X^2 < .05$, C=N.S.

Religious affiliation was examined in terms of behavior which may be related to one's chances of becoming a victim. Religious behavior is usually patterned around the ritualism of a particular church organization. In this regard, it was hypothesized that church members as a group would differ from non-church members in that church members would follow a pattern which would make them more vulnerable to property related crimes. It was further suggested there would be significant differences among members of specific church groups. Findings related to the examination are presented in Table 6.

Non-members did not differ significantly from church members on burglary and theft. However, church members were more often victims of vandalism than non-church members. There were also notable differences in numbers of property crimes committed against members of various church organizations. However, these data should be viewed with a degree of caution as the numbers of members reporting for some church organizations were small.

Table 6: Percent of households containing rural Ohioans who were victims of burglary, theft, or vandalism by religious affiliation.

Religious Affiliation	Burglary Victims (%)	Theft Victims (%)	Vandalism Victims (%)
United Methodist	1.4 (207)	8.8 (205)	16.1 (205
Catholic	4.8 (62)	1.6 (62)	19.4 (62)
Baptist	5.7 (70)	2.9 (68)	16.2 (68)
Lutheran	10.9 (46)	11.1 (45)	13.0 (46)
United Church of Christ	4.0 (50)	10.2 (49)	18.0 (50)
Presbyterian	8.5 (59)	6.8 (59)	12.1 (58)
Other	3.1 (161)	7.8 (161)	18.1 (160)
Member Sub-Total	4.1 (655)	7.3 (649)	16.5 (649)
Non-Member Sub-Total	4.0 (151)	8.0 (149)	9.3 (151)
Grand Total	4.1 (806)	7.4 (798)	15.1 (800)

It was hypothesized that how well one knew his/her neighbors would be a factor in explaining differences in rates of crime. Potential criminals are easier to detect in a neighborhood where most people know one another. More than 80 percent of rural residents interviewed said they knew their neighbors moderately well to well. Data in Table 7 revealed that differences in the degree of acquaintance did not result in significant differences in rates of burglary, theft or vandalism.

Table 7: Percent of households containing rural Ohioans who were victims of burglary, theft, or vandalism by degree of acquaintance with neighbors.

Degree of Acquaintance	Burglary Victims (%)	Theft Victims (%)	Vandalism Victims (%)
Well or Moderately Well	3.6 (688)	7.2 (680)	15.0 (681)
Some or Not Very Well	5.2 (155)	7.1 (154)	14.3 (154)
Total	3.9 (843)	7.2 (834)	14.9 (835)
	$X^2 > .05$, C=N.S.	$X^2 > .05$, C=N.S.	$X^2 > .05$, C=N.S.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Several tentative conclusions are readily apparent from the findings. Property crimes constituted the major category of crime occurring to rural Ohioans during the 1974 study period.[6] Vandalism was the crime most often affecting ruralites, with larceny-theft second. This was in contrast to crimes known to the sheriffs from the same study counties. Larceny-theft was the crime most often known to the rural sheriffs. It would appear the difference in the two findings could be accounted for by the difference

[6]Property crimes, as opposed to personal crimes, are the crimes most likely to be reported via victimization research. And thus, a tendency to diminish the saliency of the finding may surface. However, the victimization self-reporting method's worth may lie in its ability to better estimate the nature and extent of the rural property crime problem. Since the property crime problem constitutes, according to all available sources of information, the largest proportion of the total crime problem, the value of the technique remains prominent. Crimes against person, it can be argued, may likely be better represented in official records given the typically serious and threatening nature of such incidents. The two sources of documentation supplement, not supplant, one another.

in crime which occurred to rural people vs. those which were subsequently reported to police authorities. Only 45 percent of the crimes to which rural persons were victims were later reported. This finding is consistent with that from an urban study conducted in a county lying adjacent to two of the study counties. A report on the Dayton (Ohio) -- San Jose victimization problem noted, "Half of the crimes committed in both Dayton and San Jose in 1970 were not reported to the police" (1974:24).

The leading reason respondents gave for not reporting crimes was it was "no use." By this they meant they did not see how the crime would have been solved, the sheriff was often too slow to respond, the property could not have been identified, etc. Property crimes thus dominated the crime picture in rural areas. Though violent crimes were more emotional and demanding, it was the property crimes which were consuming the time of rural policemen.

Vandalism was the leading crime in rural Ohio accounting for more than a third of all crimes. Vandalistic incidents were too often passed off as "pranks" or rationalized as normal occurrences, represented by comments like, "boys-will-be-boys." It was hypothesized that vandalism now exceeds all forms of thievery in terms of economic costs. A 1977 study conducted by the American Management Association estimated that vandalism cost U.S. businessmen $2.5 billion annually. Vandalism was equal to burglary in cost and exceeded the cost of shoplifting, insurance fraud, check fraud and credit-card fraud (U.S. News and World Report, 1979:59). The situation may be the same for rural areas.

Selected characteristics of victims and non-victims were examined to determine if noticeable differences existed between the two groups or within the victim category. Independent varibles included occupation

of the head of household; the number of persons in the household; age; income; religious affiliation; and acquaintance with neighbors. These were tested against the dependent variables of burglary, theft, and vandalism. The three crimes were viewed as general indicators of rural property crimes.

All the independent variables centered about the notion of visibility. Those circumstances which perhaps contributed to increased occupancy in or around the residence, on a day-to-day basis, were hypothesized as decreasing the chances of that house being victimized. Additionally, the nature of particular lifestyles were viewed as decreasing the opportunity for property victimization both in and away from home. Simply stated: few crimes, especially those involving the acquisition or destruction of property, ~~are perpetrated~~ within full view of the intended victim. Additionally, whatever the underlying motivation for committing the offense, a high motivational level to complete the act undetected and/or sans capture is operative in all but the most isolated of cases.

Only two proved significant. First, residents in the highest income group were almost twice as often victims of vandalism than middle and lower income groups. Second, church members, from every denominational group, owned property which was more often vandalized than that owned by non-church members. The potential relationship between the two findings has not been tested. It is however note-worthy that among the selected variables only the crime of vandalism showed any marked difference. Preliminary conclusions would suggest that the crimes of burglary and theft were not predictable via the variables examined. Burglary and theft appeared to occur randomly throughout the rural sample. Vandalism appeared to occur more selectively.

Two additional tentative conclusions appear worthy of comment. First, the elderly were not disproportionately more frequent victims of property crimes. Secondly, the high rate of admitted acquaintance with neighbors in rural areas may have eradicated differences in victimization that appear to be significant in urban areas (Newman, 1972:37). Only eight percent of respondents said they did not know their neighbors "very well."

Investigations endeavoring to describe and explain the growing problem of rural crime and rural victimization are only now beginning. This study was undertaken in an effort to uncover descriptive information on the nature and extent of Ohio's rural crime problem. In addition, in an effort to discern susceptibility of certain population groups to victimization, several general socio-economic characteristics of members of participating households were tested against reported incidents of property victimization. Such general relationships must now be succeeded with more refined tests of association as we move toward explanatory phases of rural crime research. Hopefully, the preliminary findings from the Ohio rural victimization study will provide some grist for generating hypotheses for much-needed future research.

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